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International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III)

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/68 of 6 December 1999, took note with satisfaction of the report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III),[1] which was convened in Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999, and endorsed the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development".[2] In that resolution, the Assembly urged Governments, organs, organizations and programmes within the United Nations system, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and industries conducting space-related activities, to take the necessary action for the effective implementation of the Vienna Declaration and called upon all concerned to implement the recommendations made by UNISPACE III.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. In response to that request, the present report provides information on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference. It was finalized following the forty-third session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, held in Vienna from 7 to 16 June 2000, in order to reflect the outcome of that session.

II. Action taken by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies

3. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/67 of 6 December 1999, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its thirty-seventh session, reconvened the Working Group of the Whole to consider the future work of the Subcommittee in the light of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The Working Group of the Whole considered the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III as well as the work of the Subcommittee and made a number of recommendations, as reflected in its report (A/AC.105/736, annex II). The Committee, at its forty-third session, endorsed those recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole and made further progress in the following areas in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III: (a) mechanism and working methods of the Committee, including the methods to involve non-governmental entities in its work; (b) actions to be taken by the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat; (c) strengthening of the partnership of the Subcommittee with industry; (d) establishment of a consultative mechanism within the Committee to facilitate the participation of young people in space-related activities; (e) celebration of World Space Week each year from 4 to 10 October; and (f) new and innovative funding sources.

A. Mechanism and working methods of the Committee to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III

4. The Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee reviewed the strategy to address global challenges as contained in the Vienna Declaration. With regard to actions to be taken within the framework of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the Working Group of the Whole agreed that the current structure of the agenda of the Subcommittee[3] would facilitate the consideration of those issues of global concern and the implementation of the corresponding elements of the strategy referred to in the Vienna Declaration that were relevant to the work of the Subcommittee.

5. The Working Group of the Whole recommended that the Subcommittee consider the items contained in the nucleus of the strategy referred to in the Vienna Declaration through multi-year work plans. On the basis of the recommendations by the Working Group of the Whole, the Committee agreed that the agenda of the Subcommittee for its thirty-eighth session, in 2001, would include the following items to be considered under three-year work plans: (a) means of and mechanisms for strengthening inter-agency cooperation and increasing the use of space applications and services within and among entities of the United Nations system; and (b) implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system.

6. With regard to the role of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and its Working Group of the Whole in implementing the recommendations of

UNISPACE III, the Committee agreed that the Subcommittee should be assigned the task of discussing the matter and reporting each year to the Committee on its findings and recommendations for final approval and/or modifications. The Committee also agreed that the Subcommittee would discuss the matter through its Working Group of the Whole.

7. With regard to its role, the Committee agreed to consider matters relating to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III under a separate agenda item at its sessions to be held in 2001 to 2004. At those sessions, the Committee might establish a working group of the whole to consider some issues under that agenda item. The Committee agreed that it would prepare a report at its forty-seventh session, in 2004, on progress made in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III for review and evaluation by the General Assembly, in accordance with Assembly resolution 54/68.

8. The question of the participation of civil society, including industry, was also raised during the forty-third session of the Committee. The Committee took note of an initiative being taken under the theme "Priorities for space activities in the twenty-first century" under the auspices of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) as well as other initiatives to engage non-governmental entities in the implementation of selected recommendations resulting from UNISPACE III. The Committee agreed that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should review those initiatives and report to the Committee at its forty-fourth session, in 2001, on its findings and views on the modalities for the engagement of non-governmental entities. International and multinational non-governmental entities would primarily interface with the Committee through the Office for Outer Space Affairs, which would ensure that the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee were fully informed of the ongoing work of the initiatives of non-governmental entities. National organizations would continue to interface with the Committee through their respective States.

B. Plan of action of the Office for Outer Space Affairs

9. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/68, requested the Secretary-General to recommend measures to ensure that the Office for Outer Space Affairs was provided with adequate resources to implement the actions listed in paragraph 11 of that resolution on the basis of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. In connection with that request, the Office prepared a plan of action (A/AC.105/L.224), in which it reviewed its role in the follow-up to UNISPACE III and proposed actions that it could take. Some of the proposed actions had been identified by UNISPACE III for implementation by the Office. The Office identified further steps that it could take to promote or support initiatives by the international community aimed at implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The plan of action was submitted to the Committee for consideration at its forty-third session.

10. The actions proposed by the Office were designed to achieve the following objectives in support of the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies:

(a) Strengthening the role of the Committee and its subcommittees in the formulation of policy and the promotion of international cooperation in space activities;

(b) Initiating a capacity-building programme in areas relating to space law;

(c) Strengthening the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications;

(d) Promoting the use of space technologies within the United Nations system;

(e) Encouraging non-governmental entities, such as space-related industry and non-governmental organizations, to play a larger role in United Nations efforts to promote the peaceful uses of outer space;

(f) Increasing the awareness of the general public and young people of the benefits of space activities.

11. The actions proposed by the Office to strengthen the role of the Committee and its subcommittees include a biannual global survey of existing mechanisms for international cooperation in space activities and an analytical study to identify areas of space-related activities where new and innovative mechanisms for cooperation are required. As part of a capacity-building programme in space law that could be initiated, the Office proposed to organize a

workshop on legal aspects of space activities and to conduct expanded research on the national and international regulations affecting space-related activities.

12. To strengthen the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, the Office proposed to launch a series of training modules to further enable developing countries to use space technologies in the areas of disaster management, satellite communications, including distance education, and positioning and navigation satellite systems. Those training modules would include identification of technical, administrative and policy requirements, as well as step-by-step procedures to incorporate space technology in practical operations. In order to increase opportunities for participants in the training courses and long-term fellowship programmes to utilize the knowledge and skills acquired through those training activities, the Office proposed to provide technical and financial assistance to selected participants to initiate demonstration or pilot projects in their home countries, particularly in the areas of disaster management, tele-education, telemedicine, natural resource management and environmental monitoring. The Office also proposed to strengthen the technical advisory services in astronomy and the planetary sciences, including support for developing countries to participate in research and observation of near-Earth objects.

13. In support of the initiatives taken by the Committee and the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to increase the use of space technologies within the United Nations system (see section IV below), the Office proposed to conduct a survey to identify those organizations whose activities could benefit from space applications in terms of cost-effectiveness. In order to strengthen the partnership with civil society, the Office proposed to prepare proposals for pilot projects that might be carried out by industry and non-governmental organizations. It could also provide technical support to initiatives taken by non-governmental entities in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III. In launching a public outreach programme and a programme for young people, the Office proposed to organize an annual public forum to inform the public of space activities and their benefits to society at large, as well as to provide opportunities for primary and secondary schools to participate in human space flight activities. The Office also proposed to develop an interactive multimedia education service, which would provide the general public, in particular students of primary and secondary schools, with access to educational materials on various subjects of space science and technology as well as opportunities to participate in on-line interviews with astronauts and cosmonauts using the Internet.

14. The Committee, at its forty-third session, endorsed the plan of action of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and recommended its implementation. Prior to taking that decision, the Committee was informed, through an oral statement, of the estimated costs of implementation.[4] The activities proposed in the plan of action were recommended to be carried out in the year 2001, and have not been included in the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001. The potential for absorption as well as any net additional resources required would be included in the programme budget implication statement to be submitted to the Fourth Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

C. Building a partnership with industry

15. As noted by Member States, the participation of space-related industry contributed to the success of UNISPACE III. It was also noted that involving industry in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies would be important.

16. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/68, the Office for Outer Space Affairs organized, during the thirty-seventh session of the Subcommittee, a symposium on the theme "Interactive multimedia satellite services: implications for the twenty-first century", in order to strengthen the partnership of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee with industry. With regard to future sessions of the Subcommittee, the Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole concerning the structure of the symposium involving industry participation and the selection of a theme and speakers. For the thirty-eighth session of the Subcommittee, in 2001, the theme of the symposium with industry would focus on the emerging applications of global navigation satellite systems in improving the productivity of national and regional infrastructure such as transportation, oil and gas networks, agriculture and telecommunications.

D. Promotion of the participation of youth in space activities

17. The participation of young people was another major element contributing to the success of UNISPACE III. Young people contributed to the work of the Conference through discussions held during the Space Generation Forum, organized by and for young professionals and university students. Some of their recommendations were included in the recommendations of UNISPACE III, such as the creation of a consultative mechanism to facilitate the continued participation of young people from all over the world, especially young people from developing countries and young women, in cooperative space-related activities. The Vienna Declaration called for action to create such a mechanism within the framework of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

18. At the thirty-seventh session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the Working Group of the Whole noted that the Youth Advisory Council, a voluntary body, had been formed to facilitate the implementation of various initiatives proposed by the Space Generation Forum. The Working Group of the Whole agreed that the Youth Advisory Council could be granted observer status with the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

E. World Space Week

19. Following a recommendation of UNISPACE III, the General Assembly, in its resolution 54/68, declared 4 to 10 October World Space Week to celebrate each year at the international level the contributions of space science and technology to the betterment of the human condition. The dates for World Space Week were agreed upon bearing in mind that 4 October 1957 was the date of the launch into outer space of the first human-made Earth satellite, Sputnik 1, thus opening the way for space exploration, and that 10 October 1967 was the date of the entry into force of the Treaty on Principles governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.[5]

20. In response to a request by the Working Group of the Whole, the Office for Outer Space Affairs developed a plan to celebrate World Space Week for consideration by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its forty-third session. The plan consisted of the following major components: (a) creating awareness; (b) organizing United Nations events; and (c) coordination and encouragement of events.

21. In order to create awareness of World Space Week among the general public, Member States were invited to inform as many of their relevant bodies, agencies and institutions as possible about the Week and to organize events to celebrate it. The organizations within the United Nations system, space-related international organizations and science centres and associations were also invited to take similar action. The Committee noted with satisfaction that some member States had already planned activities to contribute to the celebration of World Space Week. In addition, the Office for Outer Space Affairs indicated that it planned to disseminate relevant information through its home page and that of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, as well as through the press and the media.

22. The Office proposed to organize special events at United Nations Headquarters and in Vienna to launch the first World Space Week in 2000. The event at United Nations Headquarters would be organized with the Department of Public Information. The Office proposed to include in that event demonstrations or presentations on the use of space technology in such areas as disaster response and telemedicine, a student press conference and panel discussions by astronauts and cosmonauts.

23. In developing a plan to coordinate and encourage events around the world, the Office was assisted by the Spaceweek International Association, an independent non-profit organization established in 1981 to coordinate public events celebrating a space week in March. The Spaceweek International Association had already been organizing various public events to increase public awareness of space activities and to encourage schoolchildren to participate in space activities. It decided to change the dates of its space week to coincide with the dates for World Space Week.

24. The Committee, at its forty-third session, agreed upon the implementation of the plan proposed by the Office for Outer Space Affairs to celebrate World Space Week.

F. Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and new and innovative funding sources to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III

25. The Vienna Declaration called for the establishment of a special voluntary fund for the purpose of implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III. In that connection, the General Assembly, in its resolution 54/68, requested the Secretary-General to modify the terms of reference of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications established pursuant to its resolution 37/90 of 10 December 1982, to include implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to invite all States to contribute voluntarily to the Trust Fund and, in his letter of invitation, to identify priority project proposals, on the basis of recommendations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The Assembly further requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to provide the Committee with a report listing those States which have responded to the invitation.

26. At its forty-third session, the Committee had before it a list of priority projects proposed by the Office. Having considered the list, the Committee recommended that the following projects and activities be included in the letter of invitation of the Secretary-General referred to in paragraph 25 above:

(a) Support of operational activities of the regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations, and the Network of Space Science and Technology Education and Research Institutions for Central Eastern and South-Eastern Europe;

(b) Development of disaster-specific modules and implementation of pilot projects in developing countries to introduce the use of space technologies in disaster management;

(c) Provision of satellite data and hardware and software to user institutions in developing countries to initiate or strengthen pilot projects that use Earth observation data for protecting the environment and management of natural resources;

(d) Development and implementation of a training module on the use of satellite communications for distance education, telemedicine and telehealth applications;

(e) Organization of outreach activities for young people and for the general public.

27. Following the identification of priority projects, as recommended by the Committee, all States have been invited to contribute to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

28. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/68, agreed that the Committee and its secretariat should identify new and innovative funding sources for implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III in order to supplement the resources to be provided through the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

29. The Working Group of the Whole considered the question of new and innovative funding sources and made a number of recommendations, as reflected in its report (A/AC.105/736, annex II), on the ways in which Governments, international development financial institutions, space agencies, universities and specialized space-related institutions might provide support to the regional centres and the Network referred to in paragraph 26 (a) above. The Working Group of the Whole also suggested a set of measures whereby industry could provide support, such as donating computer equipment, basic software licences, image-processing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software and receivers of satellite positioning signals for various applications. The Working Group of the Whole noted that the development of institutional capacity to use space technologies in operational programmes would also support the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. In that regard, the Working Group of the Whole recommended a set of measures to support the Programme, such as identifying user requirements and all the necessary steps required to introduce those technologies operationally, providing limited amounts of optical and radar data for pilot projects, and allowing free access for small amounts of transmission time through communications satellites for pilot projects.

III. Strategy pursued by the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and its activities

A. Reorientation of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications following UNISPACE III

30. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/68, identified the actions to be taken by the Office for Outer Space Affairs on the basis of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, including the strengthening of the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. The plan of action proposed by the Office (A/AC.105/L.224) included additional activities of the Programme for 2001 (see para. 12 above). The activities of the Programme could also be strengthened through the reorientation of its major existing activities, in particular the organization of workshops and training courses, the technical advisory services and the long-term fellowships. The Expert on Space Applications, in his report to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/AC.105/730), outlined an overall strategy to reorient the Programme following UNISPACE III and the activities to be carried out in 2000 and 2001 in line with that strategy. Those activities were endorsed by the Committee at its forty-third session.

31. The main goal of the Programme would be to promote, through international cooperation, greater use of space technologies and data for sustainable economic and social development in the developing countries. In order to achieve that goal, the Programme would concentrate initially on a few themes of major importance for developing countries and establish objectives that could be reached in the short to medium term.

32. The Committee noted that the priority themes of the Programme were: (a) disaster management; (b) satellite communications for tele-education and telemedicine applications; (c) monitoring and protection of the environment, including the prevention of infectious diseases; (d) management of natural resources; and (e) education and research in basic space sciences. The Committee also noted that within each priority theme, the following main objectives would be pursued: (a) raising awareness among decision makers in developing countries of the cost-effectiveness of space applications and of the additional benefits for their national development programmes to be derived therefrom; (b) building or strengthening the capacity of developing countries to use space technology; and (c) increasing awareness among the general public of the social and economic benefits of space applications.

B. Workshops, training courses and symposia

33. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/68, paragraph 11 (d) (iv), called for the organization of workshops and conferences on advanced space applications and new system developments for programme managers and leaders of space technology development and applications activities within the framework of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. Some of those activities carried out or planned in 2000 include the following:

(a) Tenth United Nations/Sweden International Training Course on Remote Sensing for Educators, organized in cooperation with the Government of Sweden and held in Stockholm and Kiruna, Sweden, from 2 May to 9 June 2000;

(b) Ninth United Nations/European Space Agency (ESA) Workshop on Basic Space Science: Satellites and Network of Telescopes—Tools for Global Participation in the Study of the Universe, organized in cooperation with the Government of France and ESA and held in Toulouse, France, from 27 to 30 June 2000;

(c) United Nations/Austria Symposium on Enhancing the Participation of Youth in Space Activities, organized in cooperation with the Government of Austria and ESA, to be held in Graz, Austria, from 11 to 14 September 2000;

(d) United Nations/IAF Workshop on Operational Strategy for Sustainable Development Using Space, organized in cooperation with the Government of Brazil, the Centre national d'études spatiales (CNES) of France, ESA and IAF to be held in São José dos Campos, Brazil, from 28 to 30 September 2000;

(e) United Nations/International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) Workshop on Small Satellites in Latin America, organized in cooperation with IAA, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 5 October 2000,

during the fifty-first Congress of the International Astronautical Federation;

(f) United Nations/ESA/Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) Workshop on Data Analysis Techniques, organized in cooperation with the Government of India, ESA and COSPAR, to be held in Bangalore, India, from 9 to 13 October 2000;

(g) United Nations/ESA Workshop on the Use of Space Technology in Disaster Management, organized in cooperation with the Government of Chile and ESA, to be held in La Serena, Chile, from 13 to 16 November 2000;

(h) United Nations Workshop on Global Navigation Satellite System Applications, organized in cooperation with the Government of Malaysia, to be held in Kuala Lumpur from 13 to 17 November 2000.

34. The following training courses, workshops and symposia are planned for 2001:

(a) Eleventh United Nations/Sweden International Training Course on Remote Sensing Education for Educators, to be held in Stockholm and Kiruna, Sweden;

(b) United Nations/ESA Workshop on Remote Sensing for Environmental Monitoring and Natural Resource Management, to be held in Prague;

(c) United Nations/IAF Workshop on the Use of Space Technology for the Benefit of Developing Countries, to be held in Toulouse, France;

(d) Tenth United Nations/ESA Workshop on Basic Space Science for Developing Countries in Africa, to be held in Mauritius;

(e) Second United Nations/Austria Symposium on Enhancing the Participation of Youth in Space Activities, to be held in Graz, Austria;

(f) United Nations/ESA/COSPAR Workshop on Data Analysis Techniques, to be held in Damascus.

C. Development of indigenous capability

35. The United Nations Programme on Space Applications provides education and training support to developing countries through the regional centres for space science and technology education and the Network of Space Science and Technology Education and Research Institutions for Central Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/68. The regional centres and the Network have been or are being established pursuant to Assembly resolutions 45/72 of 11 December 1990 and 50/27 of 6 December 1995. Further progress has been made in the operation and establishment of the regional centres and the Network, as reflected in the updated information provided by the Expert on Space Applications in his report to the Committee (A/AC.105/730).

36. Since it was inaugurated in India in November 1995, the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific has held the following postgraduate training courses: (a) three nine-month courses in remote sensing and GIS; (b) two nine-month courses in satellite communications; (c) a nine-month course on satellite meteorology and the global climate; (d) a six-month course in space science; and (e) a one-month course on digital image processing. A total of 226 persons from 33 countries in the region have attended the postgraduate courses. In 2000, the Centre began nine-month training courses on satellite meteorology and the global climate, on space and atmospheric science, and on remote sensing and GIS. The Centre also organized, in 2000, a one-month international training course on remote sensing and GIS technology and applications in natural resources and environmental management, and a one-week training course on applications of satellite communications for development. The number of States members of the Governing Board of the Centre has reached 14. Pursuant to a recommendation of the General Assembly in its resolution 54/67, paragraph 23, Member States concerned in Asia and the Pacific are undertaking consultations, with the assistance of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, with a view to making the Centre grow into a network of nodes.

37. The African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology—in French Language and the African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education—in English Language were inaugurated, respectively, in Morocco, in October 1998, and in Nigeria, in November 1998. The Centre in Morocco held its first workshop on remote sensing and GIS from 17 to 19 April 2000. The Centre in Nigeria held its first regional workshop on remote sensing applications from 10 to 14 April 2000.

38. The Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Latin America and the Caribbean held the first meeting of its Governing Board in October 1999. The headquarters agreement between the Centre and the Government of Brazil, which will allow the Centre to begin its activities, is ready for signature. In western Asia, following the review of a report on an evaluation mission and of offers and commitments made by interested countries, Jordan has been identified as the country that would host the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Western Asia. In the case of central eastern and south-eastern Europe, the Steering Committee of the Network of Space Science and Technology Education and Research Institutions for Central Eastern and South-Eastern Europe held a special session to discuss a memorandum of understanding for the Network.

D. Technical advisory services

39. Another major component of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications is the provision of technical advisory services, an activity identified by the General Assembly, in its resolution 54/68, for inclusion in the Programme. The areas covered include the following:

(a) Collaborating with the Government of Japan and ESA in follow-up activities relating to the series of workshops on basic space science, including the establishment and operation of astronomical telescope facilities in Colombia, Egypt, Honduras, Jordan, Morocco, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Uruguay;

(b) Providing assistance to the Asia-Pacific Satellite Communication Council (APSCC) to support its growth and operation, in particular its preparations for the APSCC 2000 Conference and Exhibition, entitled "New Vision for Satellite Communications in the 21st Century";

(c) Collaborating with space agencies and international organizations that use Earth observation data and assisting in the activities of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), in particular through the ad hoc working group on Earth observation education and training in developing countries and the Disaster Management Support Group, which will foster improved utilization of existing and planned Earth observation satellite data to support natural and technological disaster management on a worldwide basis;

(d) Assisting ESA in providing the Water Research Institute in Accra with computers and software to strengthen the indigenous capability in using remote sensing and GIS data in various environmental and water resource applications in Ghana;

(e) Collaborating with ESA and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat in supporting the implementation of projects on the use of Earth observation satellite data for monitoring glaciers and snow cover in Latin America, managing coastal resources in Asia and locating and planning the management of humid areas in Africa;

(f) Providing assistance to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, in partnership with ESA, in developing a methodology for the use of satellite images to monitor illicit crop cultivation.

E. Long-term fellowships

40. To promote the development of indigenous capability, five long-term fellowships will be awarded for the in-depth training of individuals from developing countries in the area of remote sensing. For the period from 2000 to 2001, two fellowships have been offered by the Government of China and three by ESA.

41. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/68, the long-term fellowship programme is being reoriented to strengthen its effectiveness and enhance the results of other activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. The three fellowships offered by ESA will allow university educators who have participated in the series of United Nations/Sweden international training courses to improve their skills and to demonstrate, through appropriate projects in their university environment, the practical usefulness of remote sensing.

IV. Developments in inter-agency cooperation

42. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/68, paragraph 3, urged organs, organizations and programmes within the United Nations system to take the necessary action for the effective implementation of the Vienna Declaration. In paragraph 5 of that resolution, the Assembly also requested all relevant organizations of the United Nations system to review and, where necessary, adjust their programmes and activities in line with the recommendations of UNISPACE III and to take appropriate measures to ensure their full and effective implementation, taking into account the needs of developing countries, in particular by further enhancing the coordination of their space-related activities through the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities.

A. Action taken by the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities

43. The space-related activities of the organizations within the United Nations system are coordinated at the annual session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities. Several United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Telecommunication Union and the World Meteorological Organization, have extensive space-related programmes. Details of those programmes can be found in the annual reports of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system, which are reviewed by the Meeting. The latest report (A/AC.105/726) contains an overview of the programme of work for 2000, 2001 and future years.

44. At its twentieth session, held in Vienna in February 2000, the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities noted that UNISPACE III had emphasized the importance of strengthening inter-agency coordination and cooperation in space-related activities. The Meeting reached an agreement on several issues that should lead to enhanced inter-agency coordination and cooperation.

45. The Meeting agreed upon a revised structure to be given to the annual report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system in order to better reflect the priority areas of space applications identified by Member States during UNISPACE III. Under the revised structure, the report would describe relevant experiences and lessons learned and include recommendations concerning the coordination of space activities. In that connection, the Meeting agreed to consider, at its session in 2001, a new agenda item entitled "Methods to enhance further the inter-agency coordination of space activities".

46. The Meeting noted that while UNISPACE III had stressed the importance of space technology for sustainable development, including the protection of the Earth's environment and the management of its resources, the importance of space applications had not been sufficiently stressed in Agenda 21,[6] adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. The Meeting therefore agreed that it should contribute to any future review of relevant provisions in Agenda 21, including a review of chapter 40 of Agenda 21 to be conducted by the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2001, and to a possible event to be held in 2002, 10 years after UNCED. The Meeting also agreed that its work should be brought more prominently to the attention of the heads of organizations of the United Nations system. In that connection, the Meeting agreed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs should explore the possibility of requesting the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) to resume its consideration of the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system. As a result, the Office has been discussing with the secretariats of the Organizational Committee and of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions of ACC the possibility of including the work of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities within the scope of the machinery of ACC.

B. Initiatives taken by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to enhance inter-agency cooperation

47. At their sessions held in 2000, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee took initiatives to promote the use of space technologies within the United Nations system and to enhance inter-agency cooperation and coordination in space-related activities. Their initiatives would be complemented by the work being conducted by the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities.

48. The Committee agreed that the Subcommittee should begin, from its session in 2001, its consideration of the item entitled "Means of and mechanisms for strengthening inter-agency cooperation and increasing the use of space applications and services within and among entities of the United Nations system". The item would be considered in accordance with the following work plan. In 2001, the Subcommittee would analyse the current levels of usage of space applications and services within the United Nations system and examine the utility of space applications and services for increasing the effectiveness, efficiency and coordination of the operation of United Nations entities. In 2002, the Subcommittee would identify the barriers to greater use of space applications and services within the United Nations system and examine specific means and mechanisms to eliminate those barriers. In 2003, the Subcommittee would develop specific and concrete proposals and, as appropriate, action plans for strengthening inter-agency cooperation in the use of space technology and for increasing the use of space applications and services within the United Nations system.

49. In order to facilitate consideration of the issues, the Subcommittee requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to prepare a list of questions to be circulated to United Nations entities, with the objective of increasing the effectiveness, efficiency and coordination of the space activities of the agencies and bodies of the United Nations system. The Committee approved the list of questions prepared by the Office (A/AC.105/L.223), and endorsed the recommendation of the Subcommittee that the General Assembly, at its fifty-fifth session, should request all United Nations entities concerned to provide the Office with appropriate information in response to that list of questions.

C. Cooperation between the Office for Outer Space Affairs and other United Nations entities

50. The Office for Outer Space Affairs has endeavoured to strengthen inter-agency cooperation and coordination through the provision of support to the work of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities and to that of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. It has also taken further steps to enhance its partnership with other United Nations entities in space-related activities.

51. In the field of disaster management, the Office and the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) have identified areas of mutual interest. The Office has invited the ISDR secretariat to participate in its activities, including the United Nations/ESA Workshop on the Use of Space Technology in Disaster Management, to be held in Chile in November 2000 (see para. 33 (g) above), and the preparation of a report for consideration by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its session in 2001 under the agenda item on a space-based natural disaster management system (see para. 5 above). The ISDR secretariat has invited the Office to co-sponsor a disaster management workshop for Africa in 2001. At the suggestion of the ISDR secretariat, the Office will also consider how it could contribute to the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction.

52. To provide a humanitarian response to natural disasters, the Office for Outer Space Affairs has contributed to the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations. At the invitation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office for Outer Space Affairs participated in the panel on natural disasters, held during the humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council, from 19 to 21 July 2000.

V. Enhancement of the International Space Information Service

53. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/68, called upon the Secretary-General to disseminate as widely as possible the results of UNISPACE III. To that end, the Office for Outer Space Affairs has published and distributed the proceedings of the Technical Forum of UNISPACE III[7] through its International Space Information Service, established by General Assembly resolution 37/90. Other recent publications distributed through the International Space Information Service include *Highlights in Space 1999*,[8] a compilation of reports prepared by IAF, COSPAR and the International Institute of Space Law, and *Seminars of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications*,[9] a compilation of selected papers presented during events organized by the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in 1999.

54. The dissemination of information on developments in space science and technology and on the work of the United Nations in the peaceful uses of outer space continues to be a major activity of the Office. This activity supports initiatives taken by the Office, through its outreach programme and its programme for young people (see para. 13 above), to increase awareness among the general public, in particular the young, of the benefits of space science and technology for economic, social and cultural development.

55. The International Space Information Service has been expanded through the development of an Internet home page. The home page of the Office currently contains information on the following: all the space-related legal instruments adopted by the General Assembly; the Committee and its subsidiary bodies; and the outcome of and follow-up to UNISPACE III. It includes an overview of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and information provided in accordance with the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (General Assembly resolution 3235 (XXIX), annex) by States Parties thereto, drawn from an up-to-date database established and maintained by the Office. The Office is also developing databases containing publicly available national legislation and laws relating to space activities as well as information concerning UNISPACE III.

VI. Conclusion

56. During the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, Member States expressed their satisfaction with the outcome of UNISPACE III. Organized within the existing resources of the United Nations and sustained by the contribution of civil society, including managers of private companies and young people, UNISPACE III was deemed a success by all those involved. Through the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, UNISPACE III identified common goals to be pursued by the international community in carrying out space activities for the benefit of humanity, and articulated measures to be taken to achieve those goals.

57. The time has come for the hopes and expectations raised by the success of UNISPACE III to be translated into reality. Momentum has been created for an expansion of international cooperation, through the use of space science and technology, to achieve significant improvements in the social, economic and cultural conditions of all peoples, in particular those living in poverty.

58. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies, the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities and the Office for Outer Space Affairs have begun to take concrete steps towards achieving the goals identified by UNISPACE III. Their initiatives, if supported by all Governments, all organizations within the United Nations system and as many non-governmental organizations and industries as possible, will lead to the successful implementation of the Vienna Declaration. By the year 2004, when the General Assembly reviews and appraises the implementation of the outcome of UNISPACE III, the expanded use of space science and technology should have led to noticeable changes in the human condition, and the usefulness of space tools should have been duly recognized by many international forums on a wide range of social and economic issues of global concern.

Notes

[1] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3.

[2] Ibid., chap. I, resolution 1.

[3] At its forty-second session, in 1999, the Committee agreed upon the new approach in composing the agenda of its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. In addition

to a few agenda items to be considered at each session, the current structure of the agenda of the Subcommittee consists of items to be considered under multi-year work plans and single issues/items for discussion, to be considered for one session unless extended.

[e] The text of the oral statement is contained in the annex to the report of the Committee. See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/55/20), annex.

[f] General Assembly resolution 2222 (XXI), annex.

[g] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

[h] *Proceedings of the Technical Forum* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.7).

[i] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.8.

[j] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.6.